

Message Text

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SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2155

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: FIRING MILITARY AND POLICE WHO ABUSE CIVILIANS

1. PHILIPPINE DAILIES FOR PAST TWO DAYS HAVE BEEN SPLASHED WITH HEADLINES AND STORIES RECOUNTING DISMISSALS OF OFFICERS AND MEN IN AFP FOR VARIOUS "ABUSES" AGAINST CIVILIANS. NUMBER OF DISMISSALS CITED RANGES FROM 20 IN ONE PAPER TO 37 IN ANOTHER TO AN UNBELIEVABLE TALLY IN YET ANOTHER OF 60 OFFICERS AND OVER 1,400 ENLISTED MEN. AFP CHIEF OF STAFF ESPINO SAID THAT PERSONNEL WERE DISMISSED FOR CRIMES AND ABUSES RANGING FROM MURDER TO INDISCRIMINATE FIRING OF GUNS.

2. ESPINO HAS REPORTEDLY ISSUED A STERN WARNING TO ALL AFP PERSONNEL THAT ABUSES AGAINST CIVILIANS WILL BE DEALT WITH SEVERELY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR. HE REFERRED TO JAN 30 MEMORANDUM FROM DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE STATING THAT MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL BE DISMISSED WITHIN 24 HOURS FOR DRUNKENNESS AND INDISCRIMINATE FIRING OF WEAPONS. ESPINO EMPHASIZED THAT THIS RULE APPLIES NOT ONLY TO ENLISTED

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PERSONNEL BUT ALSO INCLUDES OFFICERS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE

AFP. COMMANDING OFFICERS WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WRONG DOINGS OF SUBORDINATES. CONSTABULARY (PC) CHIEF RAMOS FURTHER ANNOUNCED THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE POLICE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WILL ALSO BE SUBJECT TO THE ENRILE ORDER. RAMOS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT ALL POLICE WERE BEING BROUGHT UNDER MILITARY DISCIPLINE BECAUSE OF SO MANY ABUSES COMMITTED AGAINST CIVILIANS. UNDERSECRETARY BARBERO HAS PUBLICLY ASKED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE BARANGAYS OF THE NATIONS IN IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ABUSES BY MEN IN UNIFORM. ALL CITIZENS ARE LIKEWISE ENJOINED TO REPORT THE TRANSGRESSIONS THEY SEE.

3. COMMENT. THE CREATION OF THE NEW POSITION OF UNDER-SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE FOR CIVILIAN RELATIONS (FILLED BY MARCOS CHUM CARMELO BARBERO), THE ENRILE DIRECTIVE OF JAN 30, AND THE CURRENT STATEMENTS AND HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTING (AND INFLATING) DISMISSALS THAT HAVE OCCURRED (THEY APPEAR TO EXTEND BACK OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS), SUGGEST THAT MARCOS IS CONCERNED AT LEAST ABOUT THE MORE VISIBLE EXCESSES OF THE MILITARY. THERE HAS BEEN INDISCRIMINATE FIRING OF WEAPONS AND THERE HAVE BEEN INCIDENTS OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR BY MILITARY AND POLICE PERSONNEL PARTICULARLY IN THE WAR ZONE OF THE SOUTH. ENCOURAGING THE PUBLIC TO REPORT THESE INCIDENTS DOES HAVE SIGNIFICANCE. DESPITE THE DRAMATIC HEADLINES, HOWEVER, THERE IS MORE AN ATHOMSPHERE AT THIS TIME OF PUBLIC RELATIONS THAN SUBSTANTIAL CLEAN UP. THE PRIMARY TARGET FOR NOW SEEMS TO BE THE LOUTS AND BRAWLERS WHO ARE FOUND ON THE FRINGE OF MANY A NATION'S MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN WILL GO FURTHER INSIDE THE MILITARY STRUCTURE WHERE THERE ARE BIGGER OPERATORS WORKING MORE SUBTLE ABUSES. MARCOS WILL PROBABLY BE WATCHING CLOSELY TO SEE HOW THE PUBLIC REACTS TO ALL THIS, AS WILL WE.

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